



**Stayton Sublimity Chamber of Commerce**

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February 9, 2021

Dear Chair Manning and Members of the Committee,

We are writing today to express our support for SB 531. The Stayton Sublimity Chamber of Commerce represents over 200 investing members and nearly 700 area businesses who are committed to growing business opportunities and providing living-wage jobs for families in our community. We support entrepreneurs and the jobs they create.

This past year has been a difficult one for our business community. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in wide-spread changes to our daily lives, and ultimately, on our ability to do business.

With the onset of COVID-19, Governor Brown issued Executive Order 20-12, which shuttered many of our local businesses in the interest of protecting public health and slowing the spread of this virus. These closures resulted in many businesses suffering extensive losses. It meant laying off employees, losing inventory, losing customers, and for some, it meant losing their business entirely.

As a Chamber we stepped in to help and in partnership with our local Stayton Area Rotary raised nearly 100K, which we provided as grants to area business throughout our region, to help afford projects that enabled compliance with the state guidelines/mandates and helped them to stay open. However, as the guidelines continued to change it became harder and harder for businesses to continue to pivot.

When businesses are closed due to public health emergencies like COVID-19, it is important that the state help those businesses recover. Our local businesses are the backbone of our community and our economy, especially our small and mid-sized businesses who have shouldered the greatest weight of these closures. We feel it is important for these businesses to be made whole. This is why we support SB 531. Our Governmental Affairs committee reviewed and voted February 8, 2021 to unanimously to support SB531.

SB 531 would allow businesses to be reimbursed for closures made during emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses sacrificed their livelihoods in order to protect the health of Oregonians. In turn, we should help these businesses - and the jobs they provide - survive.

We hope you will stand with businesses in this state and support SB 531.

Sincerely,



Carm lle Bielenberg, CEO  
Stayton Sublimity Chamber of Commerce

David Giglio, Chairman  
SSCOC Governmental Affairs Committee